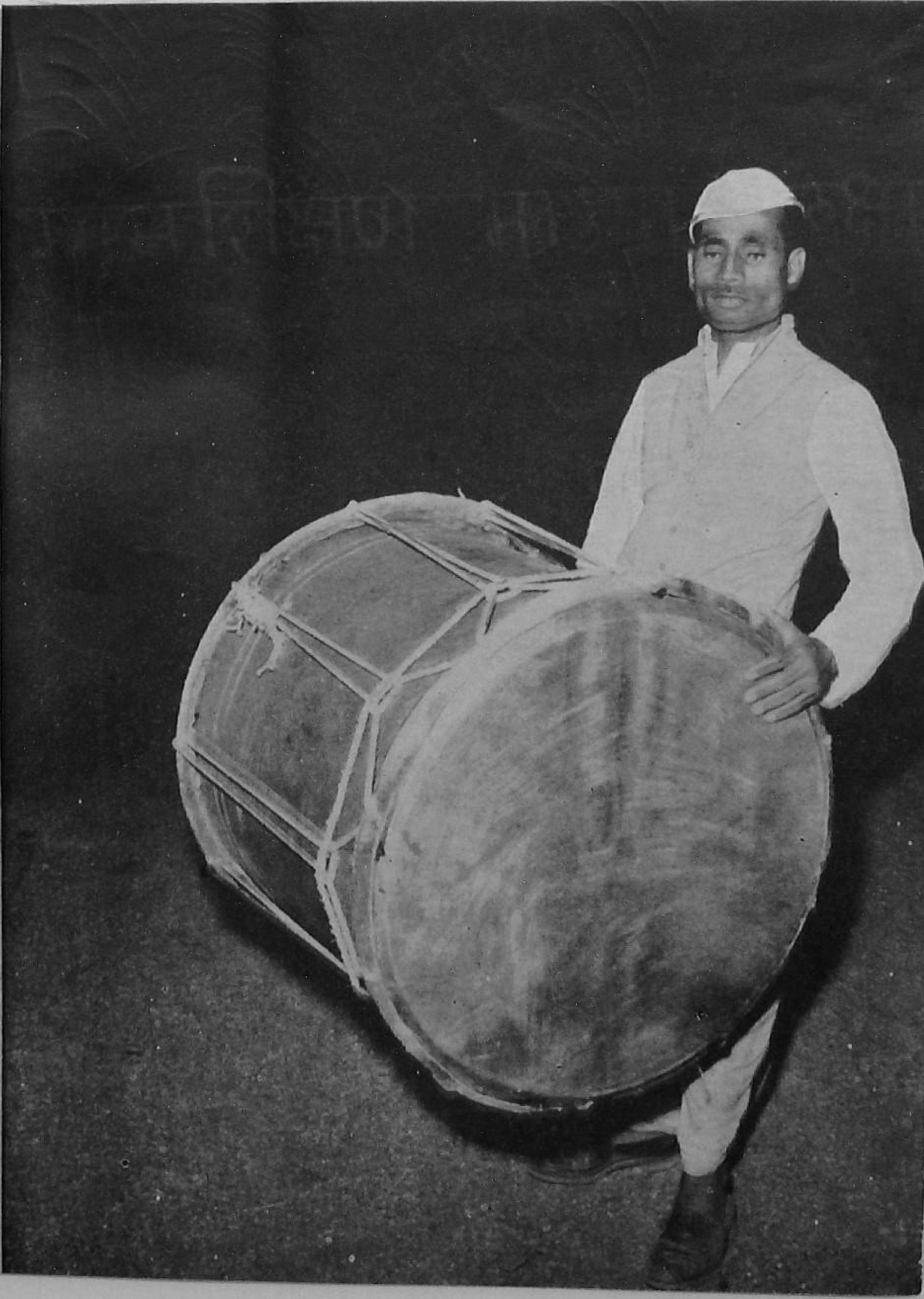
Panchayati Raj

OFFICE OF ... 30 JUN 1962 KOVILPATTI RURAL EXTENSION TRAINING CENTRE

JUNE 1962

No War-drum this! It's a call for Social Welfare and Development activities.
SHRI BABANRAO LAXMAN RAO DAVRE—*A young Sarpanch of village Rase (Maharashtra) takes up the drum himself in order to boost the enthusiasm of his fellow villagers at the time of "Gram Gaurav" function in his village (see story inside)*



The New Order

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LETTERS

TOO MANY TAXES

Sir,

RECENTLY village panchayats levied taxes on houses, country carts and village artisans. When these taxes fell in arrears the Government entrusted their collection to the village Headman (or monigar) the Karnam and the village orderly. They are given extra remuneration for this work. The total amount collected will not cover even 50% of the cost of collection. It is thus clear that the Government works at a loss and at the same time the common man feels that he is taxed for his very existence.

12-3-62 Yours etc.

391, Abjiannavattaram, *R. V. Iyer.*

TANJORE.

So far, we have been receiving reports that the Panchayats usually hesitate levying taxes lest they should become unpopular. If what our correspondent now says is correct, we may have to revise our opinion. But one thing is clear that if the Panchayats have to make progress, they cannot shirk their responsibility for taxation. No doubt, each panchayat shall have to decide for itself what constitutes a proper mean between "too many taxes" and "too little taxes" for neither is conducive to healthy results. It is our policy to encourage village panchayats not only to levy but also collect taxes. The procedure for collection varies from State to State. Where the Panchayat fails to collect by normal processes, coercive methods have to be employed either involving the Panchayat or the State Revenue machinery depending on the rules prevalent. Where the collection is entrusted to the Village Revenue Official, the remuneration to be given to him is based on the actual collections unless he is a salaried employee of the Government.—Ed.

* * * *

PATWARI AND PANCHAYATI RAJ

Sir,

I FULLY agree with the views expressed by Shri Badlu Ram, Sarpanch, Alipur in his letter dated 2-1-62 published in the February 1962 issue of Panchayati Raj. There is a folksong prevalent in this area which begins with the words *"Gaon men Gauntia loote Halka me Patwari...."* With the abolition of the Zamindari system, the menace of Gauntia has ended but that of Patwari still continues. His burden is more keenly felt in tribal areas where the rural people are comparatively more illiterate and backward. In the forest areas there is another such functionary namely the Forest-guard. Both are low-paid employees and in most cases have a pitiably low standard of education. Their way of working is still of the pre-independance era. Therefore, the need of the hour is to bring about a change in the outlook and approach of these functionaries.

This can be done by arranging a re-orientation programme for them as has been done for school teachers. Suitable changes in the administrative set-up are also called for so that they become responsible to the Panchayat.

4-4-62 Yours etc.

B. D. Pande,

Social Education Organiser.
Special Multi-purpose
Tribal Block, JANAKPUR,
Madhya Pradesh

* * *

SOME TELL-TALE FIGURES

Sir,

BANGANAPALLI Panchayat Samiti is a very backward area in Andhra Pradesh. This is part of a formerly princely State which merged into the Indian Union in 1948. Being in the rain-shadow region, this is frequented with famines. What with the visitations of famine, utter lack of irrigation facilities and the exploitation by the Nawab's court and the courtesans prior to merger, there was a complete breakdown of the economic framework. The people having lost all initiative and self-reliance, had resigned themselves to fate. There was visitation of famine in 1958-59. The revenue authorities granted remission of land revenue. The District P & D Committee sanctioned a few road works, to relieve unemployment. In spite of our best efforts, we could not push through majority of the sanctioned works mainly because of lack of identification of the people with the programme. Panchayati Raj was launched in Andhra Pradesh from 1-11-59. I have worked in this area, first as a Deputy Tehsildar and later as B.D.O. I can say from personal experience that never was the pace of development work so speeded up as after the introduction of Panchayati Raj. There is a keen competition for the execution of programmes for community benefit. With the passing of power into their hands, the people have acquired a spirit of self-reliance. Following are tell-tale figures of some of the outstanding works completed by the Panchayats :

1. 40 Elementary School Buildings costing about Rs. 9,000 each.
2. 21 Well Works costing about Rs. 5,000 each.
3. Formation of new roads, about 11 miles in length, costing Rs. 54,800.
4. Repairs to existing roads, about 5 miles in length, costing Rs. 21,000.

14-3-62 Yours etc.

G. B. Krishnamurthy,
B.D.O.

ANDHRA PRADESH

* * *

A SCHEME FOR TRIAL

Sir,

I HEREBY submit a scheme for saving the cowdung from being burnt. It may be calculated that the maximum value of cowdung, if it is burnt, comes to Rs. 60 per cow per year. And if it is changed into manure, which will be about 72 mds. the value will come to Rs. 165. The farmer will get 9 mds. of surplus grains and 1½ cart loads of surplus hay in three instalments in three years. It is a known fact that the cowdung manure is put after every three years. Thus a cultivator can have a net gain of Rs. 105 (Rs. 165-60) from one cattle and the country may get more grain and fodder. But due to lack of hard cash for purchasing fuel or due to lack of fuel itself, the cultivator is compelled to burn the valuable cowdung. Here, the Panchayat can come to his rescue. It should purchase cowdung @ Rs. 72 per cattle per year and should pay the price in kind (fuel) or in cash and after changing it into manure should sell the same at the rate of Rs. 1.50 nP. per md. Thus the sale price of the dung of one cattle for one year would come to Rs. 108. There will be a saving of Rs. 36 (Rs. 108-72) per cattle to the panchayat and Rs. 57 (Rs. 165-108) to the farmer. Thus in a village of 300 cattle, the gross income to the Panchayat may come to Rs. 300×36, *i.e.*, Rs. 10,800, out of which deducting Rs. 4,500 as the managing expenses, the net income would come to Rs. 6,300. Here is a hen which lays the golden egg for the farmer as well as the Panchayat. Would some Panchayat come forward to try the scheme ?

14-3-62 Yours etc.

Rattan Singh Banthiya

BHOPAL

We commend the above scheme for the consideration of our readers. The economics of it have to be worked out and if found practical, it surely deserves to be given a trial by some progressive Panchayats. Could we have your views ?—Ed.

PANCHAYATI RAJ IN MAHARASHTRA

My visit to Maharashtra State on the eve of the implementation of the new Panchayati Raj Act from 1st May revealed to me clearly that the people even in the remotest parts had been roused to an unprecedented enthusiasm for the shape of things to come. The calm and even tenor of village life had come to be gripped by a new sensation of power and responsibility coming to them in the near future. All those who mattered in village public life talked of nothing but the coming Zila Parishad elections. It was clear that for the first time the Panchayat Raj elections at the Zila Parishad level were going to be fought on organised party basis. This is bound to carry party politics down to the village level since the elections to Zila Parishad in Maharashtra State are going to be held on direct basis *i.e.* by the Gram Sabha as a whole. I met several officials and leading public workers but amongst them not even the most enthusiastic supporters of unanimous elections--and there have been a fairly large percentage of unanimous elections in the past—entertain much hopes of similar performance this time. The danger of party factions and groupism spreading on a wider basis in the village now seems to be inevitable. But what has surprised me is the cool confidence with which the officials and non-officials are prepared to meet the challenge. "It is all in the game and it is no use shirking the responsibility in a parliamentary democracy", seems to be the predominating attitude every where.

ZILA PARISHAD—THE PIVOT

Another thing which is being watched with keen interest by outsiders is Maharashtra's bid to make the Zila Parishad as the "best operative unit of local administration", in pursuance of which policy the Zila Parishad has been endowed with adequate powers and resources. This is a departure from the normal pattern of having the middle tier body at the Block level as comparatively stronger as was envisaged by the Balwantrai Mehta Committee and has already been adopted by States like Rajasthan, Mysore, Madras etc. I had my own doubts and so asked Shri V. S. Gopalan, Deputy Secretary incharge of Panchayats and Rural Development, Maharashtra Government, "Don't you think that the Zila Parishad being represented by one member for a maximum population of 35,000, would be so far-removed from the village unit and the common man that it would be less responsible and effective as compared to the Block Samiti which has a smaller jurisdiction?" He replied, "No. The Block Samitis would still have their own functions to perform and would be responsible for works or schemes for which grants are received from the Block. But there are certain schemes and projects which involve comparatively larger outlay and more technical efficiency such as the running of a Hospital or a Higher Secondary School or a Vocational Training Centre. These can best be administered at the district level where adequate financial and technical resources can be made available." "Moreover", he thought, "The Zila Parishad by virtue of its very distance from the village can steer clear of local pulls and thus bring to bear on the issues a more objective approach than the Block Samiti can do." The Maharashtra people are confident of the success of this new move. They have a feeling that in the past, the District Boards were able to play a vital role in the development of the rural areas, and that they can and should do so even now. It is in the context of this experience that their present efforts to strengthen the Zila Parishad should be viewed.

AGRICULTURE

I visited about a dozen Panchayats—all in one Block *i.e.* Khed near Poona about 125 miles from Bombay. Though

the Block is situated in a backward area, yet the working of the Panchayats and the various development schemes being implemented in the Block are fairly typical of Maharashtra, as a whole. The Block is in stage I since October, '60. As a result of the various developmental and welfare activities carried out during this period particularly and over the last decade in general, agricultural production has increased and there is a general rise in the standard of living of the common man. I inquired from small farmers in several villages I visited *viz.* Chakan, Vada, Surkandi, Rase etc. and I got practically the same reply everywhere, that is; their agricultural produce has gone up by nearly 50%. Their rising prosperity was reflected in their better clothing, diet and housing. One of the contributory causes of agricultural improvement has undoubtedly been the Maharashtra Agricultural lands (Ceilings or Holdings Act) 1961 according to which surplus lands have been given to the landless tenants who are now taking increasing interest in the cultivation of their fields. Improved farming practices are being gradually adopted by the peasants. During the last 2 years, 350 new wells have been dug and 72 pumping sets installed. This has increased to some extent the area under irrigation. But a lot more remains to be brought under irrigation. I was told that the water table in some parts of the Block being very low, there was a proposal to construct a percolation tank to obviate this difficulty. The consumption of chemical fertilisers and compost manure is on the increase but perhaps not as fast as one would like it to be. In spite of demonstration of improved agricultural implements, having been arranged regularly in the Gram Sevaks' circles, their use by the farmers has not become widespread. But for a few progressive farmers here and there, others have not yet taken to the mould-board plough. The crop pattern has not changed materially so far even though there have been some isolated attempts to introduce wheat and cotton growing besides some increase in area under vegetables and fruit gardening.

A barren tract in the hilly region of Khed Block being reclaimed and made fit for cultivation through levelling, terracing and bunding.

From the socio-economic as well as geographical points of view, the Block is geographically divided into two Zones, —the dividing line being the Poona-Nasik Road. The rough hilly area comprising of 105 villages lying on the Western side of the road is either barren or mainly grass-growing. Agriculture, in this part, is still undeveloped and there are but few industries. Thus the economy is mainly pastoral and therefore very backward. The area on the Eastern side of the road is comparatively more developed and prosperous. It comprises of only 52 villages. Their mainstay is agriculture. Some processing industries like oilseeds crushing and paddy husking are coming up on co-operative basis. The B.D.O. has rightly laid emphasis on developing the economy of the Western Zone. Under the Paddy Pilot Scheme, efforts are being made to relieve small farmers from the exploitation of money lenders by advancing them loans through co-operatives in the form of food grains and then recovering the same in easy instalments. I was informed that the private moneylenders used to charge as much as 1½ bags of paddy for each bag of jowar given to them as loan. 46 co-operative societies are at present engaged in advancing crop finance to paddy growers. Though large parts of the area are hilly, efforts are being made to reclaim wastelands through terracing and bunding so as to render them fit for paddy cultivation. An area of 177 acres of non-paddy lands has been converted into paddy growing. I was informed that currently the Botanical Department was undertaking a survey of the area to determine the scope of availablity of herbal wealth. This might prove a fruitful source of income to the inhabitants of the hilly areas. Industries in this part are in a very undeveloped stage. The Ekai Unit Programme has

been sanctioned only recently and some industries are likely to be set up. The forest wealth consisting of bamboos, grass etc. provides a good source of raw material for industries like paper-making, cardboard making, rope-making and matchstick making.

DAIRY FARMING

The extensive grass fields hold out tremendous dairy potentialities. The local Khilar breed is a dual purpose cattle. The B.D.O. has rightly focussed his attention on this aspect of the economy. Facing lot of initial difficulties and apathy on the part of the officials no less than that of the milkmen themselves, he has ultimately succeeded in getting a milk supply scheme sanctioned for the area. Under the scheme, 19 Co-operative Dairy Societies have been organised in various villages. These societies collect milk from their members and supply it to Poona and Bombay. At present 4,000 litres of milk is supplied daily by these societies and on an average more than a lakh of rupees is being received as monthly payment by the milkmen. Milk is brought on foot, on cycles, in carts and on asses' backs from villages as far off as fifteen to twenty miles from the nearest milk collection centre. With a view to making some of these villages easily accessible to the milk van of the District Milk Federation Society which collects the milk from the various collection centres, a 15 mile long road joining the Poona-Nasik Main road to the interior villages upto Amboli, is under construction. This work is being done as part of the Rural Manpower Utilisation Project sanctioned for the Block. I saw hundreds of villagers, men as well as women buliding the road which is now nearing completion. This has not only provided immediate employment to a large number of inhabitants of the area but holds out bright prospects of permanent employment in the near future. This will provide easy accessibility to the milk van in the interior villages that would now be in a position to sell their milk to the Federation. I was told that the supply of milk will now be almost doubled. Little wonder that the B.D.O. described the road as "Dugdh Sagar Marg" *i.e.* the road leading to the ocean of milk. I hope that when the scheme is fully implemented, this would prove the rural counterpart to the urban diary scheme of Aaery Colony with the difference that it would be more economical.

THE CO-OPERATIVES

The co-operative movement in the Block, as in the rest of Maharashtra State, has made rapid strides. Whereas three years ago, there were 26 credit societies and fourteen Multipurpose Societies; to-day their number stands at 92. Almost every village and 50% of its population is now served by a co-operative society. There is a Sale Purchase Union Co-operative Society with a share capital of Rs. 40,400 whose area of operation is the entire Taluka.

A view of the 15 mile long "Dugdh Sagar Marg", aptly known as the "Channel of milk", under construction. This will link up a number of villages in the interior and facilitate supply of milk.

It is proving very useful to the cultivators since it has not only undertaken the supply of essential agricultural commodities like seeds, fertilisers and improved implements but has also helped in marketing the agricultural products of the cultivators. It has already made a modest beginning in the direction of linking credit with marketing. It has done yeoman's service under the Paddy Pilot scheme which has saved a number of small farmers from merciless exploitation at the hands of moneylenders. An oil processing industry has started functioning on co-operative lines since last year only. This is likely to prove very profitable to the cultivators who grow plenty of groundnuts in the countryside.

GRAM SHIKSHAN

Another activity that impressed me considerably was the cent per cent literacy campaign or what they call "Gram Shikshan Mohim", in various villages of the Block. This is part of a State-wide campaign in which Maharashtra has, I think, led the whole country. I happened to be present at a colourful and

Villagers from far and near bring milk in pots and cans to the Milk Collection Centre from where the Milk Van carries it away to its destination.

at the same time a solemn ceremony of "Gram Gaurav" in village Rase. This function is held when the whole village attains cent per cent literacy. Under the moonlit sky and multicoloured electric bulbs glittering all over the Pipal tree, there was a gathering of over 2,000 people, consisting of members of all the village organisations such as Youth Club, Scouts, Girl Guides, Panchayat & Co-operative Society. The officials of the Community Development, Revenue and Education Departments were also present. In the presence of Smt. Ranade, the District Inspectress of Schools, and before the whole gathering, the neo-literates of both sexes, numbering about eighty, were put to a test and declared successful. The D.I. of schools lit the lamp first from which each person successively lit his or her lamp. They took a solemn vow to keep the lamp of knowledge burning throughout their lives. The secret of the success of the campaign lies in the fact that the services of all available literate persons including even the students of the post-primary standard of the village school are mobilised. It was a sight to see small boys and girls coaching their parents during the drive for literacy. The school teacher is the pivot and it is on his drive, efforts and selfless spirit of service that the success of the movement largely depends. Through him, the school is brought into the vortex of Community Development. In six months, about 22,000 persons have been made literate throughout the Block. A striking thing is that women, on the whole, have shown greater keenness and perseverance to become literate.

HOPEFUL SIGN

It was satisfying to note that nearly all these activities were either run directly by the Village Panchayats or with their active co-operation. The Panchayats are already well established, most of them having their own buildings, office establishment and independent sources of income. They have been instrumental in executing all local works, and organising people's participation through *shramdan* and cash contributions. Some of them have prepared their own village development plans based on Family Plans. I saw one such plan in village Rase. All this goes to show that the Panchayats in Maharashtra are well set to undertake the added responsibilities that are devolving on them as a result of the new Panchayati Raj Act.

CO-ORDINATION PROBLEM

The vexed problem of co-ordination between the Revenue and the Development staff seems to have been successfully tackled by merging Gram Sevak and the Patwari in the same cadre and entrusting them with common duties of revenue as well as development. The Panchayats have already been assigned the work of collection of land revenue. This has paved the way for smooth working between the Revenue and Development departments. In Maharashtra, not only the officials at the village level, but even at higher levels *e.g.*, B.D.Os., have been taken from the Revenue department. How well these officials have adjusted themselves to their new environments and the call of a different type of duties, became clear to me when I met the present B.D.O who has been drafted from the Revenue Department. I believe the Maharashtra State has done well to explode the myth long held by many in this country that there exists an inseparable barrier between the Revenue & Development Departments and that the "Twain shall never meet". In Maharashtra, they have already met and with good results.—*Ed.*

★

LOK SABHA

Questions and Answers

We give below some of the important questions raised and their answers given in the Lok Sabha on the 9th May regarding the Panchayat Raj and the Co-operatives.—Ed.

Question: **Has the Central Institute for training of Instructors of Panchayati Raj Training Centres started functioning? Who will manage this Institute? What will be the period of training for the trainees and whether the trainees would be asked to serve for a specific period of time after receiving training at the said Institute?—(SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA).**

Answer: The institute has started functioning since 26th March, 1962 at 6, Dupliex Lane, New Delhi. It is being managed by the All India Panchayat Parishad. The period of training is six weeks for each group of trainees. There are no such conditions attached for trainees after they have received training.

Question: Is the reported news about an agreement among the major political parties on elimination of party politics in elections to village Panchayats correct?—(SHRI N. SRI RAMA REDDY).

Answer: The Ministry has no knowledge of such an agreement.

Question: What are the States which have made legal provisions enabling Panchayats in their jurisdiction to secure free local labour for developmental programmes? —(SHRI B. N. BHARGAVA)

Answer: Legislations in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have provision for free manual labour whereas those in the States of Orissa, Punjab and Rajasthan have provided for labour tax.

Question: Has any State Government other than that of Orissa allocated any part of their revenue (except land revenue) to the Panchayats? —(SHRI B. N. BHARGAVA)

Answer: None.

Question: How many Joint Co-operative farms have been started so far and how many of them are functioning at present in the country? What is the amount so far advanced to be spent on them?—(SHRI V.C. KESAVA RAO)

Answer: There are at present 2,124 co-operative farming societies. Of these 1,415 societies were functioning in the country on 30th June, 1961 and 709 more societies were started during the year 1961-62. The Government of India has sanctioned a sum of Rs. 17,25,500 as subsidies and Rs. 28,15,300 as loans to the various State governments for their co-operative farming schemes during 1961-62.

Question: What is the number of sugar factories in India functioning at present on co-operative lines? How is the financial assistance given to them by the Central Government?—(SHRI V. M. CHORDIA)

Answer: There are at present 33 co-operative sugar factories in production. The Central Government does not give any direct financial assistance to the factories. Loan assistance is, however, given by the Central Government to the State governments for participating in the share capital of the co-operative sugar factories.

A MAHARASHTRA VILLAGE .C

By our Special C

April, 22, was a red letter day in the history of a small village Rase, situated about 10 miles in the interior from Poona-Nasik Road. It is a tiny village, in Khed Block, Poona District of Maharashtra, having a population of about 1,000. It had succeeded in wiping out illiteracy. It had also achieved a high standard of development in so far as the efficient working of the three basic village Institutions, *viz;* the school, the Panchayat and the Co-operative is concerned. It had evolved its Agricultural Production Plan based on individual family plans and had achieved a fair measure of succees in increasing agricultural production through improved farming practices. Besides, it had all the basic amenities, such as a model well for sanitary supply of drinking water, a Children's Park, a Youth Club, a Mahila Mandal, a Bhajan Mandali and even electric street lighting. Therefore, it was celebrating the occasion as "Gram Gaurav",—that is the "Pride of village". It was a matter of great rejoicing for the inhabitants of the village. Everyone,—young, old, women and children had come out dressed in their best to take part in the festival. They had invited people even from the neighbouring villages who had come in their hundreds to participate in the function.

The whole village presented a thoroughly neat and clean appearance. All the village streets were swept clean and the dirt and rubbish was carried into compost pits. Every one had cleaned his own house and plastered the mud walls and the infront of the house with Gobar paste. Strings of mango-tree leaves, flags and buntings were hoisted along the various routes. The whole village gave the appearance of a tastefully decorated bride.

Arrangements had been made to receive the V.I.P. who was to inaugurate the function. He was to be received at a distance of about half a mile from the village and the entire route was lined by hundreds of cheering villagers, men, women and children. All the officials of the Community Development Department, headed by the B.D.O., Shri K. V. Joshi and Mrs. M. Ranade, District Inspectress of Schools, A.D.I.'s. and school teachers were waiting. The V.I.P. came and he was given a guard of honour by the village boy-scouts and girls guides. He was introduced to the officials, the Panchayatdars, the members of the co-operative and other leading village leaders. Soon, he was seated in a decorated cart drawn by three pairs of bullocks and carried in a procession to the village. Amidst the melodious strains of 'Shahnai' and youth club members of different villages in their distinctive uniforms displaying their skill on *lezim,* the procession wended its way to the village.

It was already dark when the procession reached the village. Multicoloured electric bulbs were glowing on the tops of houses and the big pipal tree under which the function was held. In the spacious Jawahar Chowk, arrangements had been made for the seating of three to four thousand people, with seperate blocks cordoned off by ropes meant for different village organisations like the Mahila Mandal, Youth Club, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and others. Infront were seated eighty men and women who had been made literate. On a raised dias beautifully decorated with paper flowers and *torans,* sat the V.I.P., the District Inspectress of Schools, the village Sarpanch and the B.D.O. After a welcome

The V.I.P. being accorded a warm reception.

CELEBRATES "GRAM GAURAV"

l Correspondent

speech by the Sarpanch, the proceedings began. The neo-literates were put to several tests for the assessment of their merits. Each one of them was asked to write a few lines on a given subject. Next the A.D.I. of schools wrote some thing on the black board and they were asked to read from it. The tests of reading and writing over, they were asked to give a talk on a set subject. Though most of them had learnt by heart their say, yet it was not an easy task for them to face the huge gathering. It was interesting to observe how the simple village folk, old men and housewives, who in their lives had never had a chance to speak in the public, tried in a shy, faltering way the art of public speaking. There was 45 year old Sonabai Vadekar who narrated her experience how in that advanced age she had realised the importance of learning after she had her-self become literate and that was why she had started sending her two sons to the school now. Shri Shiv Ram Yashwant Mungse, the Youth Club leader thought that being a leader of the club, it was a matter of shame for him to remain illiterate and thus explained why he decided to be literate. Rambhan Yedu Mungse, an old man of sixty got so terrified at the sight of the audience that he could not go beyond uttering a few words. It was apparent that on the whole, the women folk had done better than the males. They proved better speakers. One of them felt so encouraged that of her own accord, she offered to recite a film song.

The programme was not de-void of its lighter side as well. The lady neo-literates were asked to give the names of their husbands. The women of Maharashtra, as in the rest of the country, are shy to dis-close the names of their hus-bands. They give out the name in an indirect way. They have an interesting cus-tom of saying something on any subject under the sun, in a manner that the name of their husband comes in some-how. This added charm and romance to the function. The whole audience enjoyed the fun. Even the District Inspec-tress of schools was not spar-ed and was asked to give out the name of her husband which, of course, she did in the usual round-about way.

The convocation came to a close with a valedictory speech by the District Ins-pectress of schools. She light ed the first lamp (signifying lamp of knowledge) from which all the neo-literates lit their lamps successively. With the lit lamp in his or her hand, each neo-literate took an oath to keep the light of know-ledge burning till his or her death; to maintain the unity of the village and to increase the produce of the village.

What started as a small idea on adult education, has after years of experience, of trial and error, developed into a successful movement. It was the experimentation by Shri B. R. Patil, then Dis-trict Inspector, Satara that led to the secret of success of the movement. In the past, various States had launched literacy campaigns and spent large amounts but the results achieved fell far short of the expectations. The example of countries like Russia having achieved cent per cent lite-racy within a reasonably short time remained as tantalising dreams. But the Satara ex-periment kindled fresh hopes. What was achieved by Russia

(*Continued on page* 15)

The Youth Club members demons-trating a formation during a lezim exercise on the occasion of Gram Gaurav function.

A Young Sarpanch of Maharashtra

IF NEED BE, he can do it with a drum too. The Sarpanch is a popularly elected leader of the village. He is expected to inspire and guide his fellow villagers to participate in community activities for their common good. There are moments when the drum comes in handy and its rythmic beat does not fail to arouse courage and enthusiasm amongst the village folk. It was on such a rare occasion that I happened to meet Shri Babanrao Laxmanrao Davre — the young Sarpanch of village Rase in Khed Block in Maharashtra. He had been an active youth club member in the past and had picked up well the drill, lezim and other sports which are performed to the accompaniment of the sound of the tabor in a characteristic Maharashtrian style. Though he had been unanimously elected the Sarpanch of the village, yet his youthful looks had not been weighted down by the cares and worries that an elderly man is prone to. And how could he sit quiet when the whole village was busy celebrating the "Gram Gaurava" function—a ceremony held to mark the attainment of cent per cent literacy and other essential welfare and development activities such as improved agriculture, good sanitation, a well-knit co-operative, a well-attended school, etc.

A Bhajan Mandali holds Bhajans and Kirtans every morning and evening in the village.

It was obvious that the Sarpanch had taken to the drum himself in order to encourage the Youth Club members of his village to outdo their counterparts from the neighbouring village who were also participating in the lezim exercises. In fact it was the day of days for the Sarpanch when the manifold achievements of his Panchayat had reached their pinnacle and were the gaze of the whole people. With justifiable pride he told me how the Panchayat had decided to launch the "Gram Shikshan Mohim" and to eradicate illiteracy from their village. "From where did you get so many teachers ?", I asked. He said, "From inside the village itself. All literate persons numbering about a dozen and the senior students of the village school joined hands and worked tirelessly under the guidance of the school teacher to make the campaign a success." He further said that within a short period of three to four months only they were able to make every illiterate person of the village, numbering about 80, literate.

He then took me round the whole village and showed me the various Local Works that the Panchayat had executed largely through local cash contributions and Shramdan, aided by some grant-in-aid from the Block. There was the Primary School building in which 3 rooms costing Rs. 6,000 had been recently constructed through the people's contribution organised by the Panchayat. A huge model drinking-water well, provided with a dozen pulleys for drawing water had also been constructed. I was next shown a large plot of land near the well being levelled and developed into a children's park. Equipments like swings, See-saw and Merry-go-round were being provided for recreation of the village children.

"What is the Panchayat doing for the economic betterment of the villagers?", I inquired. The Sarpanch remarked, "I am a farmer myself, and we all know the value of agricultural develop-

ment. Our Panchayat has given highest priority to it." He further told me how they had prepared the Village Agricultural Production Plan based on family Plans. The use of improved seeds, fertilisers and improved implements was getting more and more popular amongst the farmers. He, however, admitted that there was still great scope for bringing more cultivated area under irrigation since at present only 160 acres out of a total of 863 acres was being irrigated.

The Sarpanch told me that the Panchayat was doing everything to strengthen the village co-operative in order to improve the economic condition of the small farmers. "The Society", he said, "has a share capital of Rs. 28,265 and almost everyone of the seventy-two farming families in the village is represented on it. On an average, each family has been advanced a loan of Rs. 1,500 to help him undertake improved farming".

"Have you promoted any voluntary organisations in the village to carry on specific activities ?, I asked. "Yes, a number of them," came the spontaneous reply from him. Continuing, he remarked, "We have a Farmers' Union to promote the interests of farmers, a Mahila Mandal to work for the uplift of women, a Youth Club for the youth of the village and a Gram Sanrakshan Dal for the watch and ward of the village. Besides, there are other organisations, like the Radio Farmers' Forum and Bhajan Mandali which take part in the cultural and religious programmes of the village". I found the Youth Club particularly active. It had 157 members, all of whom put on a prescribed uniform on ceremonial occasions. They were trained in drill, gymnasium, lezim and other rural sports. They did yeoman's service in organising various community functions and celebrations in the village. The Club was self-sufficient and out of its earnings, it had contributed Rs. 500 towards the construction of the school building.

"How do you meet the cost of expenditure on various development activities in the village ?" I asked. The Sarpanch replied that besides Government grant, the Panchayat had its own sources of inocme, the main source being the house-tax which yielded about Rs. 800 every year. For specific projects, the Panchayat arranged cash contributions and *Shramdan* from the villagers.

The Panchayat, like many others in Maharashtra has already been performing for a number of years past many of the duties expected of it under the new Panchayati Raj Act. With fine traditions and pattern of working already established by such Panchayats and ably guided and controlled by seifless and devoted sarpanches like Shri Davre, the future of Panchayati Raj introduced in Maharashtra State from 1st May is well-assured for it is based on secure foundations and there is no danger of its sailing in an uncharted ocean.—V.D.

Children's Park for the recreation of the young ones of the village.

SHORT STORY

THE OLD GRUDGE

GEORGE A. FLORIS

"I don't know of any old scores to settle between the two of us" ....said the Mukhiya.

"You REMEMBER me, don't you?" the young man's voice was aggressive when he confronted the white-turbaned mukhiya of the village panchayat on the threshold of the latter's own home.

"Of course," the mukhiya replied calmly, giving a twist to his snow-white handlebar moustache. "You are Hari Ram from...........er...."

The young intruder cast up his jaw. "That's correct. I am Hari Ram from Ganeshpura. It has taken me six years to come again, but now here I am to settle old scores."

The muscular youth stared at the mukhiya with a glow in his eyes, but the erect old man stood his ground.

"I don't know of any old scores to settle between the two of us. You, Hari Ram, and two of your friends from this village got intoxicated with some horrid green-coloured concoction made of tree bark or something...... You disturbed the peace and the panchayat had to take action. I dealt with you in my official capacity, without any personal malice."

Two of the mukhiya's small grandchildren emerged and his young daughter-in-law listened trembling to the exchange of words behind the door left ajar.

"I doubt whether the sentences you pronounced were strictly according to the law," Hari Ram said vindictively, apparently enjoying his own eloquence he had developed during the years spent in the city.

"So do I, but........" the mukhiya tried to intercept him, but Hari Ram went on forcefully :

"Never mind that angle, old man. I don't care, if you went against law. However, I do care that you went against justice. The panchayat, guided by your advice, externed me from this village for six months, while all the punishment my two companions were given was a suspended fine."

"I must correct your memory," the mukhiya said, still imperturbably calm. "The fine was not suspended, it was conditional. I ordered your two drinking companions to pay a fine of fifty rupee each unless they erected a bund around their fathers' plots of land within ninety days. Working hard they fulfilled their task, so the fine never became payable. You don't belong to our village,

your people have no land here, so we could not impose the same corrective penalty on you, could we?"

"Look, Mukhiyaji", Hari Ram said in a slightly milder tone, "I did not come here to fight. No doubt, just after I heard your sentence, I felt bitter and dreamt of vengeance. Being stopped from visiting a neighbouring village, that was a disgrace and plenty of people laughed at me. However, a few weeks later I went to the city, became a building worker; now I have a wife and two children. You can see, I am no longer a man who drinks, or looks for trouble. But now, that I came home for a short holiday to Ganeshpura, I thought I drop over to you and ask—just ask—why did you treat me so harshly then?"

"Let's go to see the fields," the old man said and led the way, his silvery moustache glittering in the gentle rays of the setting sun. Though flabbergasted by the seemingly irrelevant suggestion, Hari Ram followed him.

They walked next to each other for several hundred yards without a word.

"Look at the crops," the old man said at last. "Although you are a building labourer now, you hail from the village. So you can tell the difference between past and present, can't you ?"

"They look much better now, I can see that," Hari Ram could not repress the spontaneous acknowledgement.

"So you can see that! And what caused the improvement? That punishment. After your two friends had been compelled to build the bund around their land, soil erosion stopped there and the yield grew much bigger next year. The other kisans saw it and, in their case, there was no longer any need for compulsion. They set up their own bunds in no time, seeing what a difference that makes..........So, what the panchayat wanted all the time was attained by our slightly irregular handling of your misbehaviour."

"I can see that," Hari Ram nodded thoughtfully. "But why did you have to extern me for six long months from here?"

"Now don't you see," the mukhiya said with a smirk under his thick moustache. "We had to be seen doing justice. Building the bund was a hard task for your friends, so your own penalty had to be of a similar gravity. Besides, "he added with a mischievous glint in his old, knowing eyes, "had you continued to come over to make merry with the two of them, I am not sure, whether the bund would ever have been erected."

"I have only a few days left of my holiday, "Hari Ram said, viewing appreciatively the promising paddy, "but as soon as I return now to Ganeshpura, I shall get busy on a bund around the land of my folks there. A voluntary penance for the sins of the past........"

They parted with a friendly "Namaste".

AROUND THE STATES

ANDHRA PRADESH

PROHIBITION CAMPAIGN

THE STATE Government has carried on a vigorous campaign for the effective enforcement of prohibition and the programme is reported to have caught the imagination of the people. Presidents of Panchayat Samitis and Chairmen of Zila Parishads have also taken keen interest in the enforcement of prohibition and in educating the people on the evils of drink. The youth organisations in the villages are also associated with the campaign.

* * *

BIHAR

DRAWING VILLAGE PLANS

THE SCHEME for the drawing up of village plans was initiated in Bihar, and the State Government made arrangements for the training of officials and non-officials connected with Gram Panchayats to ensure that all concerned fully understood the scheme.

* * *

DELHI

DEVELOPMENT OF FISHERY

COLLECTION OF fish seed with drag net was undertaken in the Shahdra Block during February 1962 and about 16,000 fingerlings were collected and kept in the Government fishfarms for rearing purposes. The normal progress of stocking fish seed in the village tanks also continued and 75,500 fingerlings were stocked in 10 village tanks during February 1962.

* * *

HIMACHAL PRADESH

GRAM SAHAYAKS' CAMPS

25 GRAM SAHAYAKS' camps were organised in Himachal Pradesh during January and February 1962 and 962 Gram Sahayaks were trained in these camps.

* * *

MADHYA PRADESH

FOUR-PHASED TRAINING PROGRAMME

WITH THE decision taken by the State Government to inaugurate the Panchayati Raj during the current year, an extensive Panchayati Raj training programme at all levels involving 2,75,000 non-officials and 13,000 officials has been launched in the State from April 19, 1962 to facilitate the smooth change-over to the system of democratic decentralisation at the district, block and village levels. A comprehensive scheme along with the syllabus for the four-phased training programme at the state, division, district and block level has been chalked out.

* * *

MAHARASHTRA

GRAM EKAIS

THE STATE Government has taken steps, in consultation with the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, to select 8 Blocks, at the rate of 2 Blocks in each Division for setting up Gram Ekais centres. 25 centres will be set up during 1961-62, out of a total of 250 planned for the Third Five Year Plan.

* * *

RURAL MANPOWER UTILISATION

3 PILOT PROJECTS for the utilisation of rural manpower were started in Maharashtra during 1960-61. Steps were being taken by the State Government to select 15 more Blocks under the scheme this year.

* * *

ORISSA

TRAINING COURSE IN NUTRITION

A TRAINING COURSE in nutrition for the members of the mahila samitis for a period of one month was organised at the Home Economics Training Centre, Barapall with effect from 1st February 1962. 42 members attended the course. A similar course was later organised with effect from the 8th March at Bhubaneswar and 49 members of the mahila samitis participated in it.

* * *

RAJASTHAN

GRAM SEVAKS AS PANCHAYAT SECRETARIES

THE GOVERNMENT of Rajasthan decided to appoint Gram Sevaks as secretaries to Panchayats in seven selected Panchayat Samitis in different districts as an experimental measure. The Government had earlier taken a decision to appoint village teachers as secreta-

ries in the desert and hilly areas of the State, where literate persons were not available for appointment as Panchayat Secretaries.

* * *

PANCHAYAT SAMITIS MAKE HEADWAY

An additional area of about 40,000 acres was brought under irrigation in Rajasthan during the last quarter of 1961 through the efforts of the Panchayat Samitis. As many as 2,523 wells were constructed during this period. The Panchayat Samitis spent a sum of Rs. 2.46 crores, 44 per cent of the total allocation, on various development works. This included Rs. 52 lakhs of people's participations in the form of labour and cash. The income of the Samitis through their own efforts was Rs. 5.84 lakhs. So far 156 Panchayat Samitis in the State have imposed taxes. The estimated revenue from these taxes will be about Rs. 37 lakhs a year.

* * *

UTTAR PRADESH

TAX COLLECTION STRESSED

The State Government attaches great importance to the collection of taxes by the Panchayats. An intensive drive for the realisation of taxes by all the Panchayats was accordingly undertaken during February 1962.

* * *

SANITARY LATRINES

With a view to popularise sanitary latrines, 10 masons were trained in the construction of these latrines under a short-term course arranged at Parikshatgarh in the Meerut District and 62 sanitary latrines were constructed. A production centre for sanitary latrines was also started at Alamgirpur. The centre has presently a capacity for producing 5 seats per day.

* * *

A MAHARASHTRA VILLAGE CELEBRATES "GRAM GAURAV"

(Continued from page 9)

through compulsory mobilisation of the educated people, has sought to be realised through voluntary social services of all the available literate persons in the village, including even the small children studying in the village school. In a village of an average size, thirty to forty persons thus become available for teaching. The Gram Sikshan Mohim as it is known, is run under the over-all charge of the village Panchayat. Each Social worker is allotted one or two illiterate persons whom he is expected to make literate in three or four months. It is a heartening sight to see the small child teaching his or her own parents or other elderly person of the family. The education department supervises and guides the whole movement. The school teacher provides the necessary day-to-day guidance and spends two to three hours every day in the service of the villagers without any honorarium. One may draw lesson from the fact that so long as the campaign rested merely on the shoulders of the paid school teachers or social workers, the movement did not succeed but the moment the responsibility was entrusted to the village community as a whole and the school teacher was freed from the bondage of honorarium, the movement came into own and was carried onward to success on the crests of "selfless labour of love". This is how, it has made and is making an unprecedented progress in Maharashtra. It was on 17th April, 1961 at Shivaneri that it was officially adopted as a state-wide movement. In the first year, about 10 lakhs of illiterate persons were made literate at practically no cost to the exchequer. It cost the people only one rupee per literate person. Under the old conventional methods based on government grant-in-aid system the cost came to about rupees ten per person made literate, and then hardly 50,000 persons could be made literate in ten years.

At last, the key to achieve more and more at less and less cost in the field of adult education, seems to have been found. Moreover, in 'Gram Gaurav', both education and community development have met. The dream of the school becoming a centre of community activities and the school teacher playing the role of the leader of the village has come true. Though the emphasis during the whole process is on education, the idea is to achieve alround development of the village.

FROM THE CENTRE

STUDY TOURS FOR NON-OFFICIAL VILLAGE WOMEN WORKERS

The Union Ministry of Community Development, Panchayati Raj and Co-operation has prepared the broad pattern of a scheme of study tours for non-official village women workers and circulated it to the State Governments. The objective of the scheme is to broaden the vision of the rural women workers and develop in them self-confidence. It is expected to enable them to overcome cultural inhibitions and help them break the barriers of castes and factions. The study tours will be at the Block, District, State and National levels and their duration will be 2 to 3 days, 5 to 7 days, 10 to 15 days and one month respectively, the maximum expenditure being limited to Rs. 10, Rs. 20, Rs. 100 and Rs. 200 respectively. 50 per cent of the total expenditure including boarding, lodging and travelling cost etc. will be borne by the participants. It has been suggested that the members of the study tour selected should be either active members of Mahila Samitis, or village women workers with good record of service, members of functional sub-committees of Panchayat Samiti or women workers who have undergone long-term training of one month, or good Balwadi or craft teachers working on honorary basis in Mahila Mandals or trained village dais. The Block Panchayat Samiti will select participants for study tours at the Block level, the Zila Parishad for Study tours at the district and state levels and the State Government for study tours at the All India level. It has further been suggested that for the National and State level study tours only those women should be selected who have already participated in Block or District level study tours.

* * *

NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Government of India have decided to set up a National Advisory Committee for collaboration with Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh which is running a number of pilot projects in different states. The Union Minister for Community Development, Panchayati Raj and Co-operation will be the Chairman and the Union Deputy Minister, C.D.P.R. & C., will be a member of the Committee. Besides, there will be nine representatives of State Governments on the Committee. Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh will be represented on the Committee by Sarvashri Jayaprakash Narayan, Shankar Rao Deo, Anna Saheb Sahasrabuddhe, K. Arunachalam, R. K. Patil and Prabhakarji.

The Committee will review from time to time the experiences of the States in the working of the pilot projects, pool experiences, and suggest remedies to the problems that may arise in the course of implementation of the joint programme.

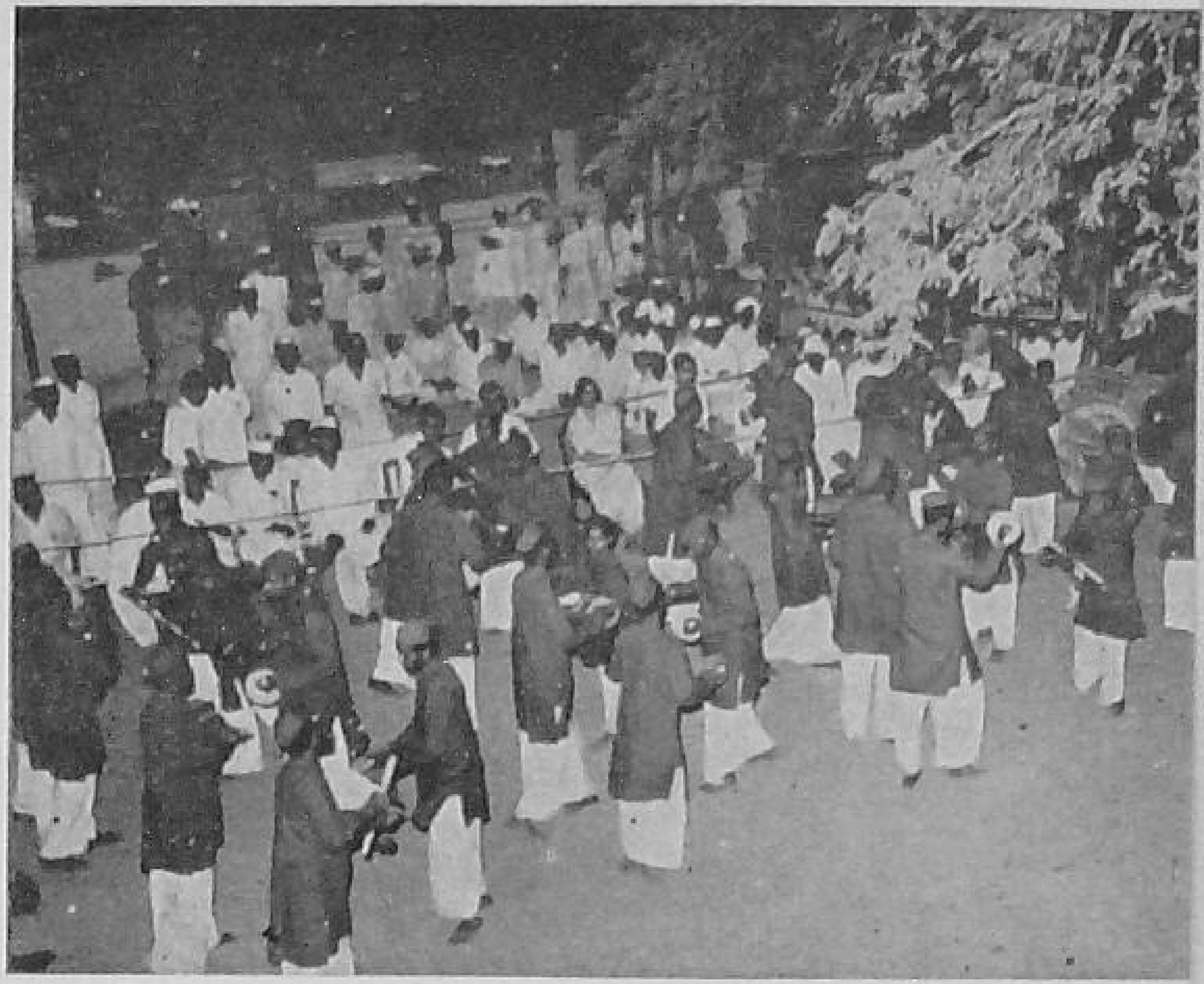
CONFERENCE OF STATE DIRECTORS OF YOUTH PROGRAMME

State Directors of Youth Programme, who met in Delhi recently, recommended that greater importance should be attached to the development of a spirit of adventure amongst youth by organising outdoor programmes like hiking, trekking and camping. The Conference also laid emphasis on selective formation of youth clubs with special reference to qualify rather than number. All the States, it recommended, should organise a systematic programme of youth sports and festivals at the village, block, district and state levels and accord recognition to those who stood first at the State level by giving them a place of honour at the Republic Day Parade.

Shri S. K. Dey, Union Minister for Community Development, Panchayati Raj and Co-operation, who inaugurated the Conference suggested that organisers of the youth programme, should endeavour to promote a system by which the C.D. Block authorities could pick out certain villages where youth were known to possess "definite urges" and start some extra curricula activity related to local environment.

A MAHARASHTRA VILLAGE CELEBRATES GRAM GAURAV

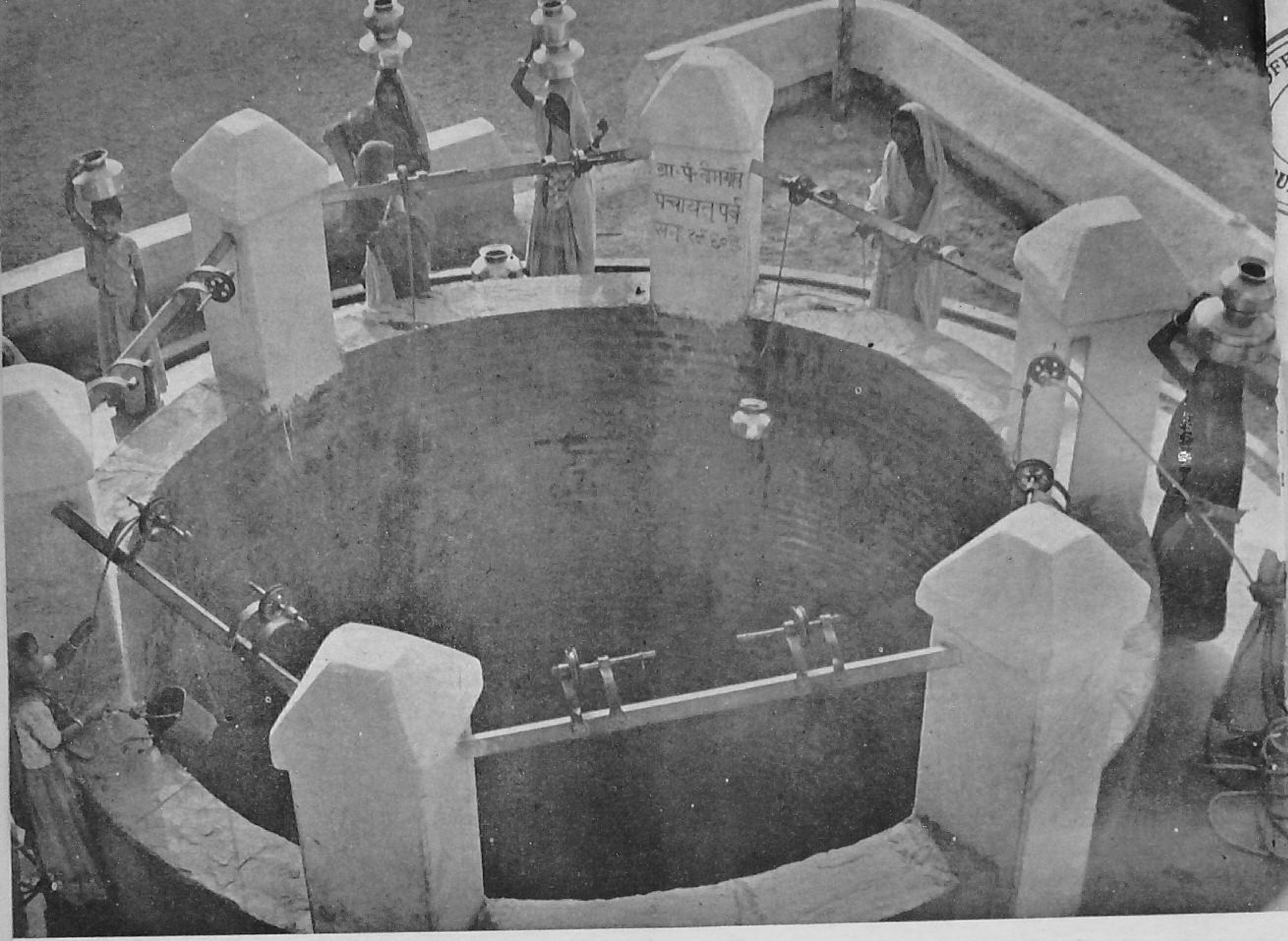
Gram Gaurav is an occasion for joy and pride for the whole village. To the accompaniment of the beat of drums, the young as well as the old join hands to celebrate the function.



The members of the Youth Club, clad in their distinctive uniforms give a performance of **lezim** *exercises. They do so in a spirit of emulation with members of other Youth Clubs from the neighbouring villages invited on the occasion.*

A literacy class is on. It is now the turn of young boys and girls to teach their elders who had remained illiterate so far. Under the Gram Sikshan Mohim, all available literate persons of the village including the school-going children are mobilised to render voluntary service in the cause.

The function ends with the lighting of the lamp (of knowledge) by the neo-literates who take a solemn vow on the occasion to keep the flame of knowledge burning till their death.



Sanitary drinking water is a basic necessity of life. Under the C. D. Programme and Panchayati Raj, a number of sanitary drinking water wells like the one seen above have been constructed in the countryside.

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